JOHN ALVEY TURNER'S
MUSICAL MONTHLY

KEYNOTES

(With which is incorporated the "BANJO MONTHLY" and "MANDOLINE LIBRARY."

"Take you your Instrument, play you the whiles."—Taming of the Shrew.

Vol. II. No. 24 MAY, 1909 PRICE FOURPENCE

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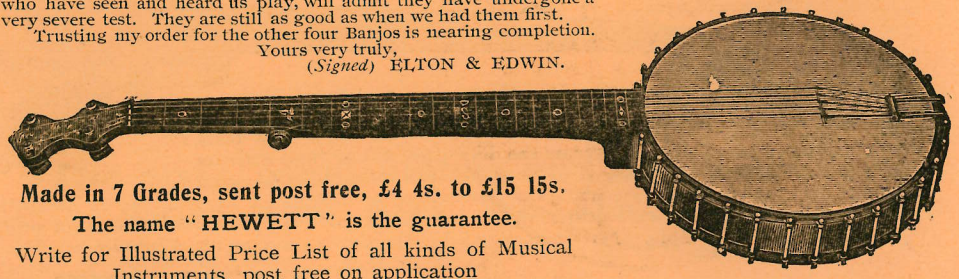

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THE LATE E. W. MACKNEY.

WITH the recent death of "The Great Mackney," another link between the past and present has been severed. As one of the pioneers of the old school of Banjo playing, the name of this "inimitable" entertainer has for many years been a familiar one, less so to the players of the present day naturally, than to those who can recall the times and the entertainments of the past generation. Then, the Banjo itself bore only a general resemblance in form to its present day successor, and a tutor for the instrument in the writer's possession—compiled by E. W. Mackney—gives diagram and scale for the Banjo with *nine* strings, amongst others.

E. W. Mackney was born on February 11th, 1825, the son of a schoolmaster under whom Lord Beaconsfield had studied. So delicate was the child Edmund that it was only by great care that he was reared, and in later years he attributed his healthy old age to the habits and abstemiousness he had practised in his youth. His earliest musical efforts were connected with a toy Violin, but with parental permission and aid he was not long before extending his studies, and the Piano and the Banjo were added to the Violin in entertainments at which he appeared, his first professional appearance being at the Whitechapel "Pavilion."

About this time (the early forties), a negro entertainment by a small troupe of Americans inspired Mackney to adopt their line of work, and he soon made himself famous, appearing before many Royalties during a continental tour. On his return he ventured the speculation of a hall of his own, and after some reverses he succeeded in making for himself a name which was popular to the last. He is said to have been the first comic singer who appeared at the Crystal Palace, and for many years he toured the country—notably with the famous flautist, Nicholson. Of his songs, the one which perhaps has been the most successful of all was "In the Strand," the copyright of which was the property of John Alvey Turner. There were endless arrangements of this popular melody—no less than eight are before me as I write—and there are many others. He died at the age of 84, retaining his old vitality and genial good nature almost to the last.

LEGER LINES.

The announcement that Mr. A. D. Cammeyer will appear at the London Coliseum, on Monday, May 10th, has undoubtedly caused considerable interest amongst his many friends.

✣ ✣ ✣

Not only will it be a novelty, but from an artistic point of view it will appeal to musicians—the only audience in fact that Mr. Cammeyer cares to have. We have it on the best authority that the orchestral arrangements will be as perfect as can be made, while the Zither Banjo in the hands of its master will be at its best.

✣ ✣ ✣

With this the success we all hope it will be, and with Messrs. Joe Morley and Chas. Rogers as Banjo duettists —as we have reason to believe they will be often heard in future, there should be a very bright prospect in view for the Banjo.

✣ ✣ ✣

Cannot someone suggest a name to distinguish between the different styles of Banjo players? Years ago a "Banjoist" meant a performer on the Banjo—just as a Violinist or Flautist conveys at once the meaning of a player on either Violin or Flute.

✣ ✣ ✣

Now the word "Banjoist" may mean one who plays on either a "Zither Banjo" or an "Ordinary"—two quite distinct instruments as regards tone production as well as construction—and certainly the plectrum player should have some identifying name whichever Banjo he uses.

✣ ✣ ✣

We should then be in a position to "place" players in the particular style they affect, and a deal of speculation would be saved—besides which, intending hearers would benefit. As it is now, the name "Banjoist" is far too elastic.

✣ ✣ ✣

With the Guitar also, although the general elementary principles of playing are alike, the advanced student recognises quite distinct schools in the Italian and Spanish methods. The late Madame Pratten, artiste as she was, never seemed to take kindly to the effects so familiar in the Spanish style.

✣ ✣ ✣

And whether Mandolinists should play with a flat or an arched wrist is another question that some of the best authorities are always debating. Then, the problem of the plectrum and how it should be held is always with us.

✣ ✣ ✣

We are told that the Japanese are beginning to manufacture Mandolines on the Italian model, and have succeeded in turning out tolerably good instruments—according to "Musical Opinion." Why, is not quite obvious, for the Mandoline is not an instrument that the Japanese are credited with using to any extent—and even if it were so, surely the Italian article is cheap enough.

✣ ✣ ✣

It seems, however, that to encourage the manufacturing interests of Japan, its Government have decided to allow its countrymen "to experiment in making foreign products at the Government's expense, and thus check the importation of foreign goods." Which idea has *not* been culled from British methods.

By the way, if you hear of a "Mandola" being sold for sixpence, don't worry—it is the name given to a mouth harmonica recently patented by a German firm.

✣ ✣ ✣

There has been quite an outcry as to the London County Council's "banned" music. Out of a list of 22 pieces which are not allowed to be played, twelve certainly savour of the coon and the cake walk, but of the remainder six are overtures, and four descriptive pieces. And all items in future are to be by different composers.

✣ ✣ ✣

According to a correspondent in the "Times" we are entirely in the wrong as to the associations of the "coon song." The writer says—"I found this class of music is tabooed . . . in all negro communities. I have not yet heard anywhere in the States a single coloured man or woman whistling or singing any of the songs attributed in our comedies to the conventional coon."

✣ ✣ ✣

Mr. Patteson (Banjo and Mandoline teacher from South Africa, now visiting London), tells us that the favorite musical instrument amongst the Kaffirs is the ordinary three-bar Autoharp. They sling this round their necks with a string, and the music they produce from it appears to give them untold happiness.

✣ ✣ ✣

At the South African seaside resorts "buskers" are as familiar on the sands as they are here it seems, and some very good entertainments are given in the season. It seems rather strange, though, to hear that in a country where the coloured races are kept so under control a party of white men will *black up and appear as a negro troupe.*

✣ ✣ ✣

Whether a coloured troupe could reverse the idea and do a Pierrot act is a moot point, and would probably prove a risky experiment.

✣ ✣ ✣

"Sylvanesque," by Joe Morley, is now ready, published in full music size with a most effective Pianoforte accompaniment (No. 800 in the "Banjo Budget" series) at 2/-. From the reception this charming Gavote is meeting with at concerts, it is easy to predict for it a big sale.

✣ ✣ ✣

The notes on the "Balalaika," a number of concert reports, and several replies to correspondents are unavoidably held over until next month. Our Mandoline and Guitar readers will also find their interests will not be overlooked.

✣ ✣ ✣

In our last issue we announced the arrival in England of a Mandoline Soloist whom we were advised was an artiste of exceptional brilliancy. Signor Persichini has now reached London, and has called on us, giving a recital on his instrument which more than justified the good opinion which preceded him. His repertoire is most extensive, and includes most of the later opera overtures—played from memory—with an indefinite variety of classical works and some original compositions. The "Sinfonia," "Septette," and "Le Village" of the Concert series were each played with a perfection of skill, execution and expression that at once showed the *maestro.*

We shall be glad to forward any communications with regard to recitals or concert engagements, and Signor Persichini can be met by appointment at the Studios at 39, Oxford Street, for lessons.

BITS OF BANJO INFORMATION.

By A. DE VÉKEY.

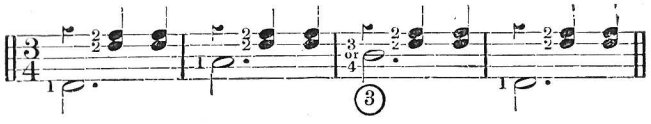
(Continued)

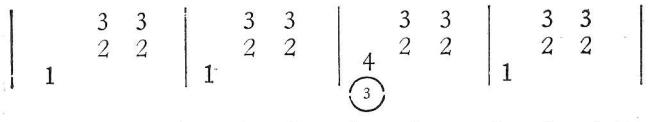
IN Ellis's "Thorough School for the Five-Stringed Banjo"—which, even to-day, I still consider the best extant for beginners—I teach pupils to play Exercise I, on page 14, as above example, namely :—

Keeping the third finger on the E throughout the exercise, and only using the second finger to stop the A in the sub-dominant chord.

"*Not to move a finger unless absolutely necessary*," is a good rule to follow in playing either of the "allied three."

The following is an example how the barré can in some cases be dispensed with, and a better effect produced. Try it.

With Barré.

Without Barré.

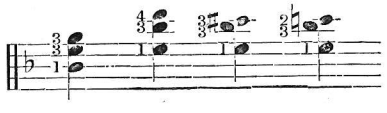


By employing the fingering shown in the latter example, it will be seen that the top D and F can be firmly held down throughout the four bars, while the little finger is at an angle that enables the B on the third string to be clearly stopped with the extreme tip.

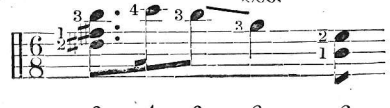
With the first example there is a *tendency* when the third or fourth finger is used for the B to slightly raise the second finger that is holding down the top D and F, or failing that, the B has to be struck quickly, and the finger lifted off, otherwise D and F (especially the D) will probably be slightly "muffled."

At any rate the fingers haven't the freedom in the first as they have in the second example ; moreover, the B, being sharply taken off—to clear the D—does not represent the value it should, namely, a dotted minim.

I could give hosts of instances, but just a few will suffice.

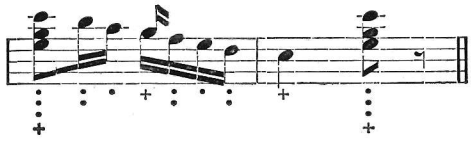
The following four chords fingered like this—

to me would seem better if they were fingered like this—

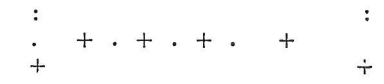
4	4	4	2
3	3	3	3
1	1	1	1

Then too, in a solo where the melody is flowing, by not using the barré to much, an opportunity may occur when parts of the melody can be pleasingly "vibrated," thus (in Oakley's "Pastorale") :—

instead of :—

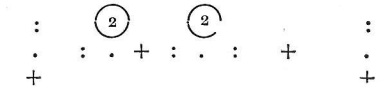
3	4	3	2	2
1				1
2				

Let us just take two bars from "Dashwood Quickstep," that bright and tuneful solo, that promises to reach a popularity in excess of anything recently written for the instrument (the last two bars of the trio).

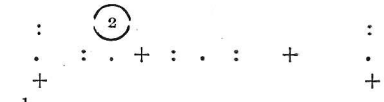
I take it that the right hand fingering is intended to be this :—

It also may be thumb and first fingered like :—



It can be taken like this :—



But I don't care much for it, do you ?
And I certainly think fingered thus :—



is as good as any.

Examples exist plentifully in most solos, but the few given will, I trust, suffice to make my meaning clear.

There is much to recommend the non-usage of the barré where possible, as it does not necessitate dropping the wrist to a different angle than that used when stopping the strings with the finger-tips.

"THE BOY AND THE MAID."

I.

I'll tell you a tale of a Banjo boy,
And a maid with a Mandoline,
Only nineteen was the Banjo boy,
While the maiden was sweet sixteen.
They met in a Banjo and Mandoline band,
At rehearsals of course you will all understand,
And the boy fell in love with the maid with the
The maiden of sweet sixteen. [Mand';

II.

Oh, bashful indeed was the Banjo boy,
And bashful and coy was the maid.
Nervous was *she* when she met the boy,
And nervous was *he*, I'm afraid.
At a concert one night they'd to play a du-*ett*,
'Twas a night that neither will ever forget,
—Just ten years ago, and they're not married yet;
This bashful boy and the maid.

III.

He looked very queer, did that Banjo boy,
As he stepped on the stage with the maid,
But she, whom he thought so bashful and coy,
Of pertness the acmé displayed.
The duet went as shaky as shaky could *be*,
He'd play'd it, she said, in quite a wrong key,
He said something worse—it opened in D ;
Here endeth the boy and the maid.

THE CAMMEYER CONCERT.

AMONGST the many who filled to overflowing the Steinway Hall on April 22nd, there were but few whose memories extended back to the first of all our London Banjo concerts, almost twenty-five years ago, before the "Zither" had come amongst us, when a simple March or Schottische and a Banjo song were the principal items, when the amateur band was of a very different (almost *in*different) type, often a collection of quite elementary players, and the soloists were, perhaps, pupils whose second course of lessons had only recently commenced. What changes have marked the times, in place as well as player, between those days when the dining room of a Restaurant in the City held the audience, and the present when a West End Concert Hall has to "turn money away," as was done on the present occasion. What recollections some of the old Banjo concerts recalled. Herbert J. Ellis, who always seemed to have a batch of new compositions for every occasion—Walter Howard with his quaint and eccentric get up, with his Banjo over his shoulder and dragging a chair after him—Arthur Tilley, and others of the pioneers. Then there were the St. James's Hall Concerts, and the scene of enthusiasm when Mays and Hunter first gave them "William Tell" allegro—when Farland came to show us what the Americans appreciated in classical selections. Oakley we heard first in London when Windsor and Taylor came with their Banjo band by special train from Birmingham. What a meeting that was after the concert, and how we saw them off at midnight on their homeward journey? The youthful Olly Oakley played "Zampa" overture amongst his selections then, and the event with its many recalls, lingers to this day. Then there were the Banjo concerts that Will C. Pepper used to "run," with a Banjo club of just a few picked players, who would to this day hold their own could they be mustered again. But they couldn't! Not the old "crowd." Ossman, Clark and Earle, and many more names can be conjured up, but space forbids, and our concern at this time is with the present rather than the past. It was the tremendous success of this recent concert that recalled the triumphs of some of the earlier ones, especially as some of the artiste's names have been as familiar in the past as they are in the present. That of A. D. Cammeyer is known wherever the Zither Banjo is played, while to "Ordinary" Banjoists Joe Morley is more than a name—he is a player to follow and learn from, either by actually listening to or by his compositions.

That is just where the great success of this concert was so noticeable. To many an audience a long programme of works, however good they may be, and even by different soloists on any one instrument, the interest will waver, and the feeling show itself that some contrasting relief would be to the advantage of all concerned. So in this case a programme of fifteen numbers (which we knew would represent more than twice as many items) promised to show Zither and Ordinary Banjos at their actual best, and it need not be taken as empty flattery when the opinion is expressed that such an evening is likely to do the Banjo more substantial and lasting good than many of its precedents combined.

The opening item was "Wellington Lads" March, given by Mr. G. Alexander's Zither Banjo Club, crisply and in good time. A pleasant surprise followed this in the announcement that Mr. Ben Lawes would sing. We know Mr. Ben Lawes, and his appearance seemed to settle the conviction that the evening was going to be one of the best. With Mr. Kydd as Zither Banjoist we have long been familiar. He gave "Yuletide Waltz" first, and had to respond to an encore.

After the encore had been played there was a feeling of expectancy apparent—that hushed murmur and rustling of programmes that precedes the appearance of a favorite artiste. And then, as Mr. Joe Morley stepped on to the stage, came an outburst of applause that even seemed to surprise *him*. The generally imperturbable features *had* to relax with the warmth of the greeting, and the ovation was certainly one that he could be proud of. His familiar little knack of hooking the Banjo by a bracket to a black silk neck ribbon, was the signal for silence, and to the charming melody of "Sylvanesque" (the solo part of which appeared in our last issue), we were once more enjoying the sweet and mellow tone of the good old "ordinary," the notes stopped with a precision that showed a mastery of the finger-board, and plucked with a seemingly tireless right hand. The second item in the number was his "Kentucky Parade"—quite a contrast to the stately gavotte both in style and execution, and a good example of the work which gained for him the title of the "Lightning" Banjoist.

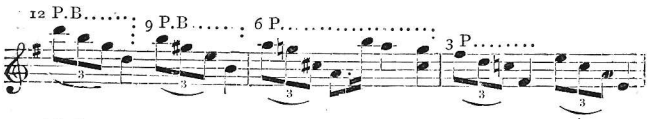
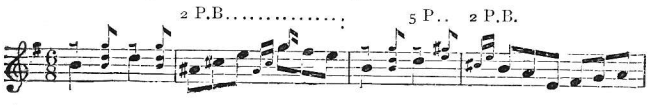
Of course Joe Morley was not to be let off with *two* solos, and a third distinct style was given us in his "Patrol" March, as the softly played little melody

developed gradually in tone, and then through its other movements, and died away into an almost imperceptible harmonic. But this seemed merely to whet the appetite for more, and only the accompanist again taking his seat calmed the applause. This time "Danse Arlequin" was given, a dainty little solo which will doubtless have hosts of admirers,

After a song by Miss Dorothy Carter, the turn of the Zither Banjo came, and this time Mr. A. D. Cammeyer and Mr. Harry Fiske showed us by examples such as they have given before with such consummate skill and taste, how the instrument *should* be played—"A Christmas Carol" and "Berceuse" being chosen from Mr. Cammeyer's compositions to illustrate delicacy of touch and expression in rendering charming melody. Mr. Cammeyer's duet parts are, of course, works quite apart. It is doubtful whether he himself ever plays them twice alike, and this always adds to their value—one can always look for new beauties. After the encore item, a vocal duet diversified the programme, the first part of which closed with Mr. Cammeyer's solos. These were three, "Miniature No. 3," "Humoresque," and "Valse Chantante." It is hardly necessary to say more than that they were all received with the attention and applause that can alone satisfy an artiste. Mr. Cammeyer must have known from these that his work was appreciated, and further comment is superfluous. The second part opened with a Zither Banjo Quartette (playing "A Sonnet" and "Minuet"), and the next star of the evening followed—another brilliant exponent of the "ordinary" in Mr. Charlie Rogers. Here was a style as distinct from that of Joe Morley as could be—a tornado of notes rattled out with a tonal power that was irresistible, as "La Infanta" went with whirlwind speed.

Tremendous applause greeted the player on its conclusion, and he also had to give two encore pieces "Hot Corn" (*Paul Eno*), being the first, and his own arrangement of the celebrated "William Tell" allegro for the second. This again left no room for criticism, for its execution was marvellous. Mr. Harry Fiske selected two of Cammeyer's recent compositions for his solos, "Albumblatt" and "Debutantes" Valse, in both of which he showed a combination of feeling and musical expression of the highest order. One of the most important events to the "ordinary" Banjoist was the joining up of Joe Morley and Charlie Rogers as duettists. We had been familiar with both as soloists, but what must their duets be like? There seemed to be no two opinions after, and it is to be hoped that we shall hear much of them in this connection again. They recalled the early days of Mays and Hunter—when they were at their best, and, having music which had been specially written, and by a writer such as Joe Morley is, the result was an instantaneous success.

Their first number was "Mountaineer's March"

The alternate fingering in both parts (specially arranged duets parts—not a doubled first) being wonderfully clean and effective. The outburst at the conclusion of the March told its players there were no doubts as to having to take an encore, and they followed with "Water Nymphs"

This was another most effective contrast in style, the second Banjo part well balanced and tuneful. As this piece always *does* get an encore when Joe Morley plays it as a solo—and he is featuring it everywhere—it hardly needs mentioning that there were more reasons than ever why it should have one now, and the players took their seats for the third time. A rather slowly played melody with soft accompaniment

rivetted everyone's attention as the number was commenced, to be followed by

in quick time. This was "Darkie Chuckle," a concession to those who love what some call the "characteristic" Banjo music. Perhaps it is, and maybe too much of it will *not* "elevate" the instrument, but there was no shadow of doubt but that the audience liked it, and why not? We ought to smile sometimes, and if the Banjo does make us want to tap the floor with our toes on occasion, what's the harm?

A splendid evening all through. Whether we play Zither or Ordinary we want such Concerts to occasionally spur us on. Both styles had a splendid show, and that way spells good all round.

HAVELOCK MASON.

REGARDING THE "BANJO CONCERTO."

Signor E. ROSSI writes:—"With reference to Mr. Stent's suggestion for a 'Banjo Concerto,' I think the idea is a very good one. Even at the present time to a certain proportion of the general public the Banjo is still considered as a nigger minstrel instrument, and it carries the stigma with it, to my mind. A. A. Farland was the pioneer in trying to bring the Banjo into line with other instruments in a genuine musical sense, on which both the grave and the gay could be depicted, and even a *little* of the classical could be rendered with pleasure and advantage. Farland has been criticised by many of his contemporaries on this account for trying to elevate the taste in Banjo music, but never mind what his enemies think or say, he has done a monumental work, and when many other composers and arrangers for the Banjo are forgotten, or scarcely heard of, Farland's name and fame will be remembered. No doubt he goes too much on the classical lines, but it must be remembered he is an enthusiast, and such men are liable to overdo their ideas. Now to the 'Concerto,' the best and happiest writers for the Banjo should be notified that a 'Concerto' is the order of the day, and good inducement given that their 'Chef d'Ouvre' will meet with substantial recompense. Take 'Eno' Lansing, Armstrong, Morley, Cammeyer, Oakley, Farland and others I cannot at once call to mind. These are the men who ought to be capable of doing justice to the Banjo as composers, and who should be able to write a splendid Concerto, embracing all styles of playing and making a landmark in Banjo composition. I hope to see some of these exponents of Banjo composition and playing come to the fore with their Concertos."

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The simplest of the six. Bright movements in well marked time

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"Return of the Regiment" *(E. Grimshaw)*
The popular Band item of the season

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Most melodious throughout. Easy to play and Encored everywhere

"Beat o' the Drum" *(Emile Grimshaw)*
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Rather more difficult. A showy solo for stage or concert platform

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AUSTRALIAN MATTERS.

Written for "KEYNOTES" by W. J. STENT.

THE month of April will be remarkable in that the Banjo, Mandoline and Guitar in this Country, though they have been long and favorably known, are accorded for the first time a public recognition on their merits, by being included in the monster syllabus of the First Grand Commonwealth Eisteddfod. The item figures in the instrumental section as "Banjo, Mandoline and Guitar Orchestra," not less than 10 members, entry fee 1/- each, own selection, first prize £5 and gold medal to conductor, second prize £2. Up to now there are some six entries, including the "Sydney Plectrum Orchestra" of 40 members, conducted by myself, and the piece chosen is the Gavotte "Life's Lighter Hours," and, as far as is known, this orchestra is the only combination in Australia having the proper instrumentation, viz.:—1st, 2nd and 3rd Mandolines, Tenor Mandolas, Mandocellos, 1st and 2nd Banjos, Bass Banjo, 'Cello, Flute and traps. The members are rehearsing regularly and enthusiastically, and will leave no stone unturned in the competition for first prize; but, as one member of experience sagely remarks, "the best band does not always win." No matter where the first prize is awarded, the importance of the occasion is worth noting, and will do much to forward Banjo, Mandoline and Guitar interests.

The management of this colossal competition intend making it an annual affair, and we have the assurance of the hard-worked secretary that next year will see a considerable amplitude in the Banjo, Mandoline and Guitar section as well as others, and will extend over three weeks. "'Tis a musical country we live in, my masters." The Sydney Town Hall is a lofty and centrally situated building adjoining the Cathedral. The acoustic properties of the auditorium require four or five thousand people to absorb the echo, which is at times very pronounced.

The phenomenal march into popularity of our instruments during the last few years is a concrete fact, which cannot be brushed aside or discounted by any ordinary opposition. Apropos of this, some years back a Piano teacher, who is still resident here, added to his income by writing up the musical notices of a Sydney daily, and once expressed himself thus: "The Misses M—— also performed on their ribbon-bedecked Banjoes, *or whatever they may be called*," while another, who was an Organist of some repute (now deceased), vented his fury by referring in his concert notice to "Mr. H—— and his hybrid society," and suggested that the "applause was occasioned by the conclusion of the items." Doubtless the concerts left much to be desired, as they were engineered by persons of little knowledge of Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar possibilities, and while concerts are likely to be still given at which our instruments, in the hands of raw novices, render primitive and expressionless numbers, yet it is to be noted that they are either ignored altogether in the reports, or are treated with more consideration than their merits deserve, showing that sharp cutting antagonism, as expressed in bigoted personal opinion, is now a thing of the past; such press notices never did any harm, or any good either, true merit will down all opposition.

On page 6 of the December, 1908 issue of the "Crescendo," a reference is made to a statement recently printed in a London Banjo paper to the effect that a widely circulated magazine would do all that is possible or desirable as well as or better than a Guild, on this debatable assertion the views of the Secretary to the American Guild, Mr. H. F. Odell, will be fully endorsed by all who read them. Such a statement seems on a par with "one soldier is as effective as a whole regiment," and would have passed unnoticed had it not been printed in a paper professing Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar interests. For anyone, no matter how gifted or favorably situated, to claim publicly to be the "whole show," clearly indicates the nature of the opposition all attempts at British Guild formation will have to reckon with in known quarters. However, there is an efficient and honorable way to surmount this and all difficulties, and when finally the good ship "British Guild" slips her moorings and clears the shoal infested harbour (excuse the simile), on her voyage of prosperity and usefulness, there is less danger of shipwreck from rocks which show well above high water mark. The shoal waters as represented by the class who seem naturally to be always looking through the wrong end of their binoculars, require only to be marked on the Guild chart and then carefully avoided.

Most Australian players would cordially welcome and assist in every possible way the formation of a British Guild, owing to being situated between, and many miles from each of the large centres of Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar interests, &c. Meantime the American Guild is moving solidly forward, and it remains to be seen whether or not it shall accomplish British results on British soil by reason of British inability or indifference coping with the situation.

YES, Sir! we surely know how to appreciate good things out here in Australia, even when, unlike "KEYNOTES," they are not shining brilliantly by force of contrast.

Purveyors of B. M. & G. literature the world over can note how contributors may profitably be extended beyond the limits of "one man" selection. Having read the special Christmas number of "KEYNOTES," it must at once be written off as the cleanest, brightest and most instructive ever issued in the interest of our instruments, and one reader, at least, is confidently anticipating the time when "KEYNOTES" double number will not be confined to the festive month, and will vote right away for raising the yearly subscription and double numbers every month, and "so say all of us."

Mr. W. H. PLUMBRIDGE,

Conductor of the London B.M.G. Orchestra and the Brighton Ladies' Mandoline and Guitar Band and Banjo Orchestra

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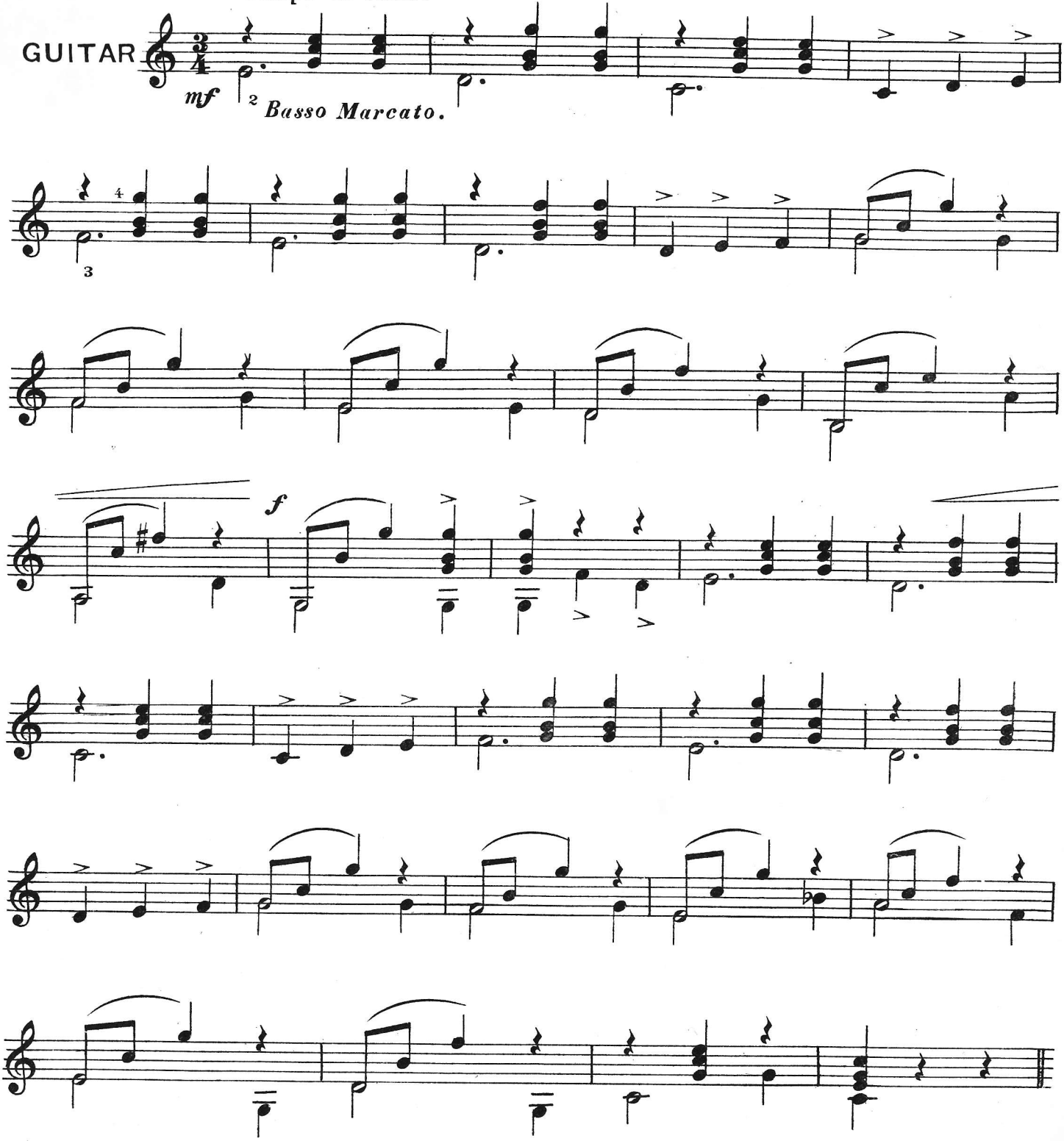
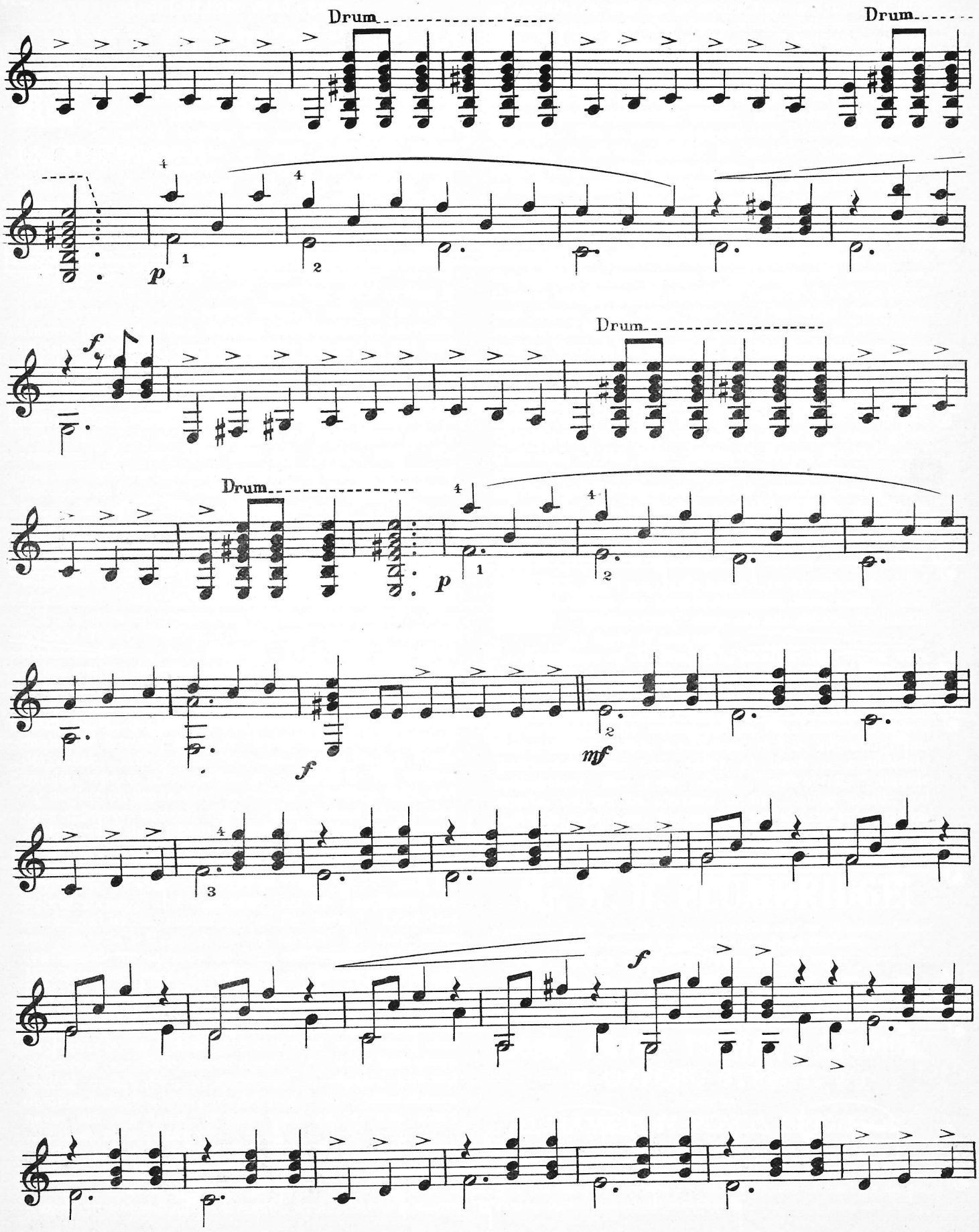
FLORENTINE.

VALSE.

F. MANCINELLI.

Tempo di Valse.

GUITAR

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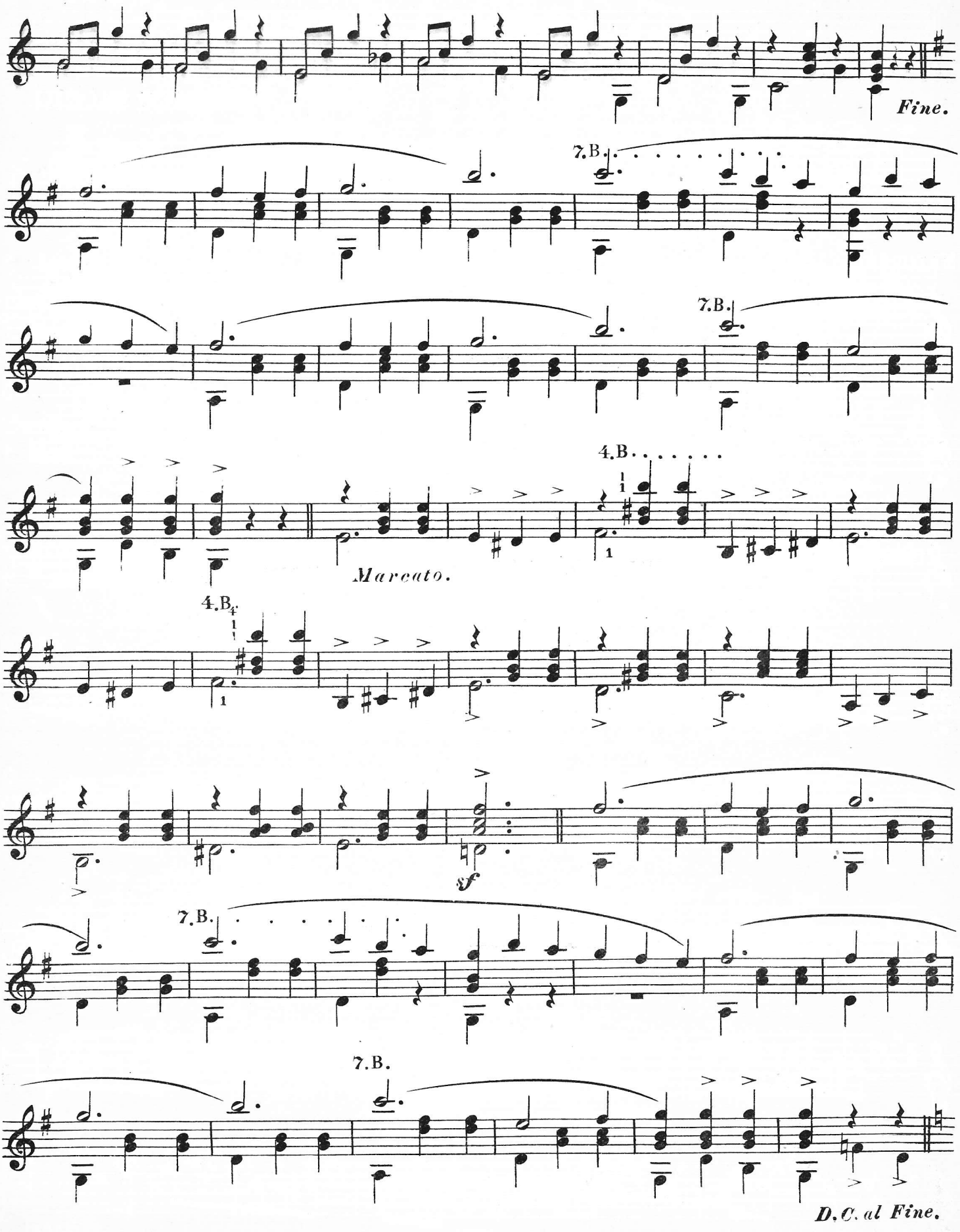
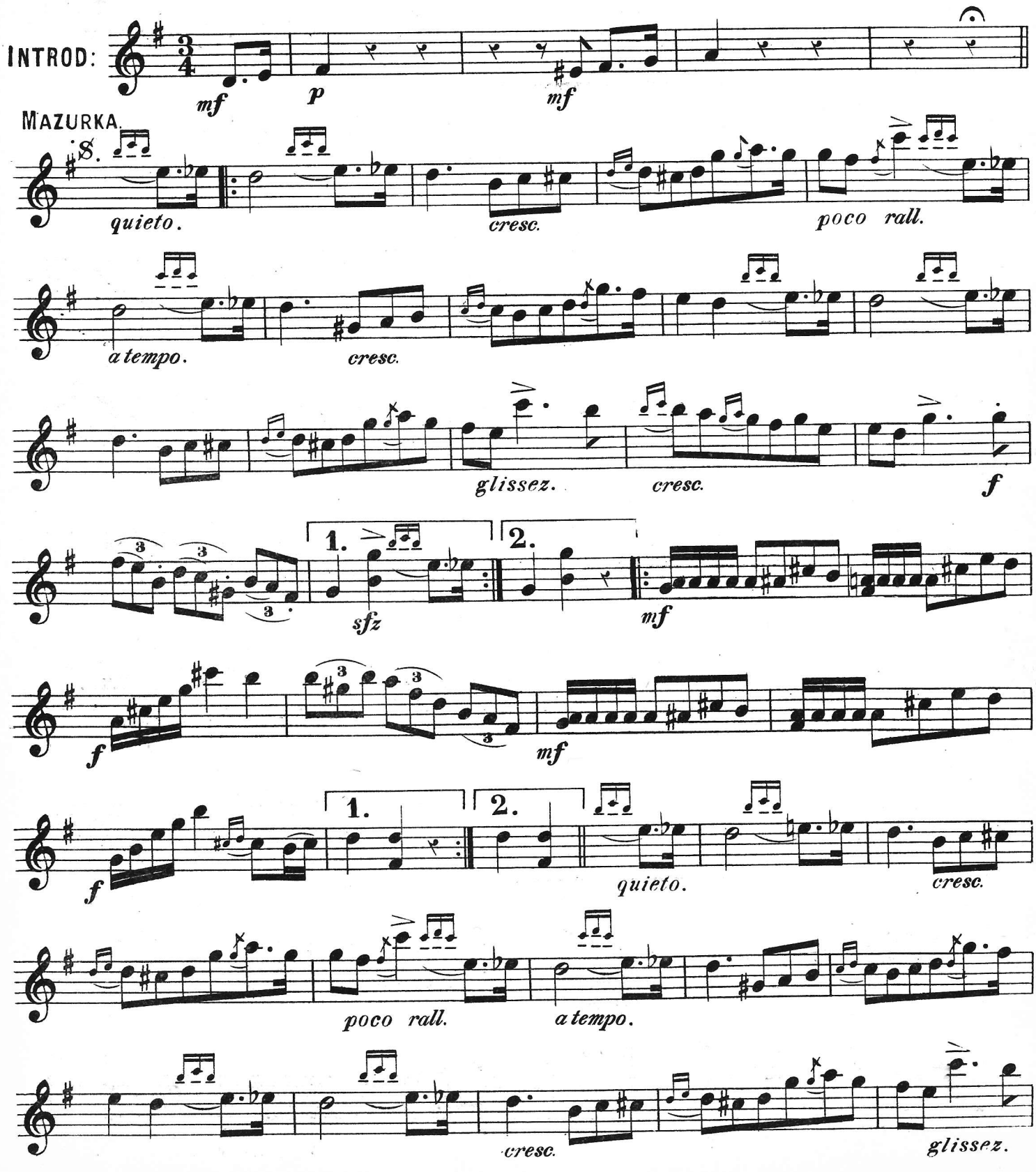
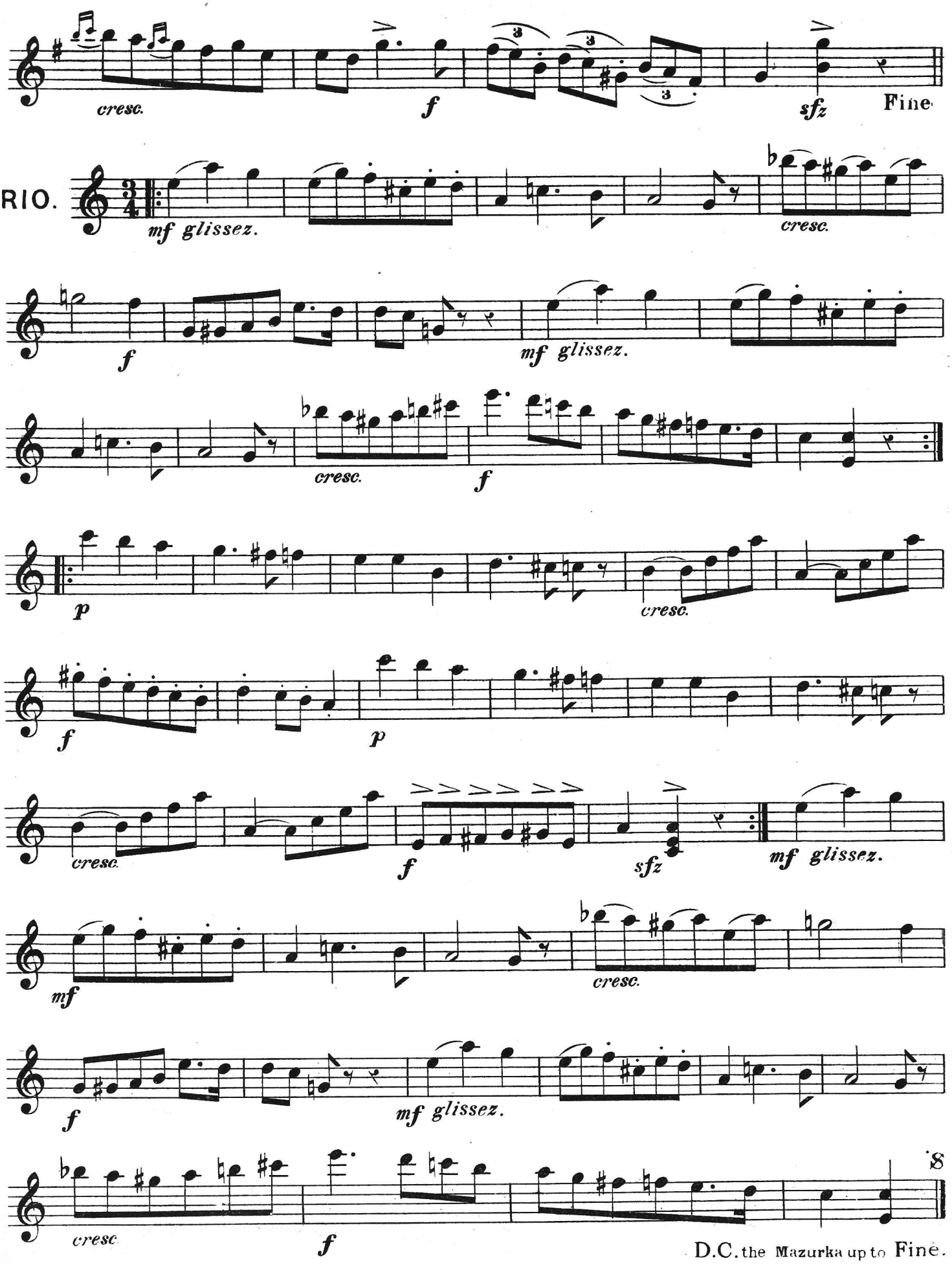

Fine.
7.B.
7.B.
4.B.
Marcato.
4.B.
sf
7.B.
7.B.
D.C. al Fine.

CARLUCCIA.

(MAZURKA.)

MANDOLINE.

FEDERICO SACCHI.



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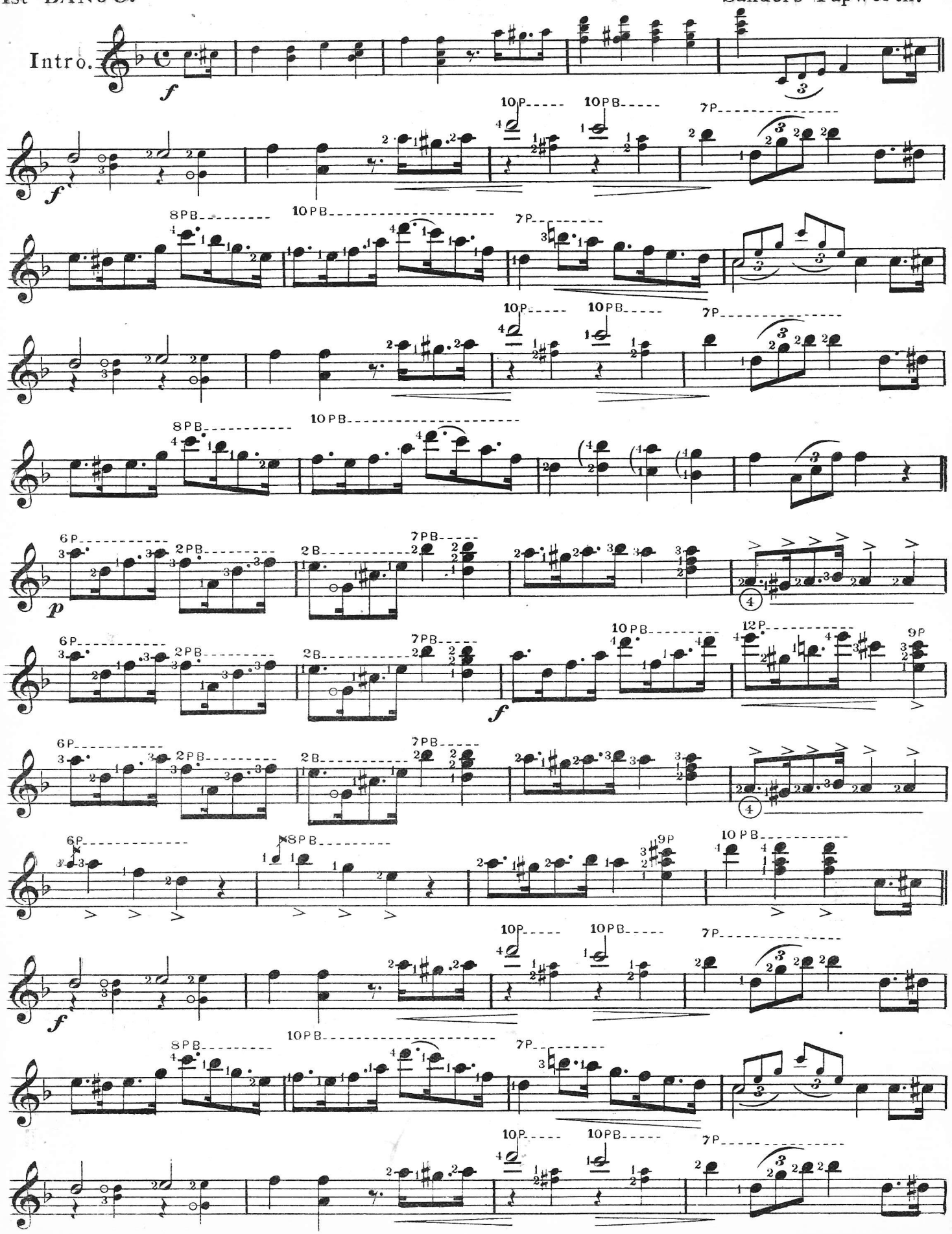
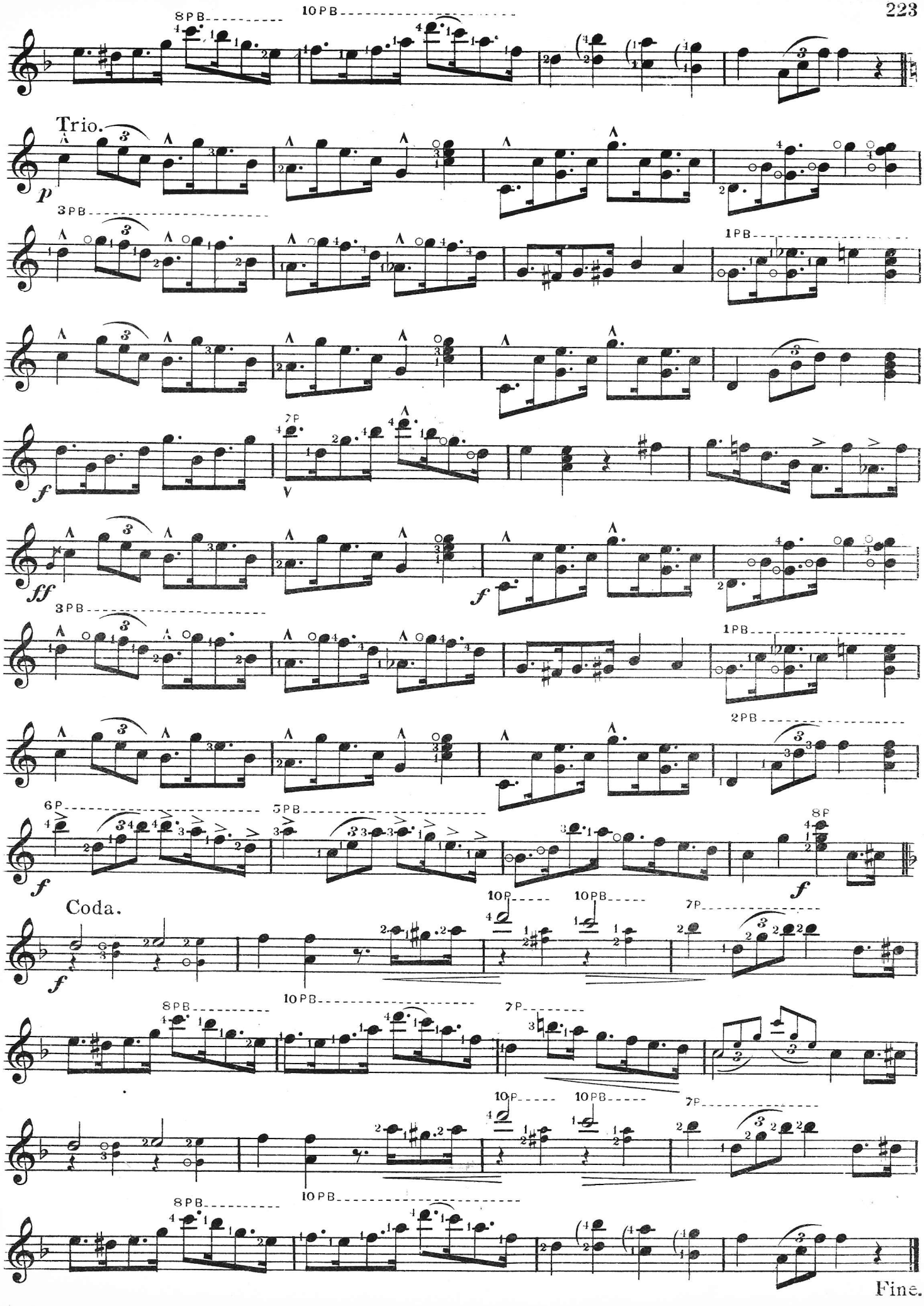
D.C. the Mazurka up to Fine.

UNCLE JOHNSON.

DANCE.

1st BANJO.

Sanders Papworth.

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7P
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10P
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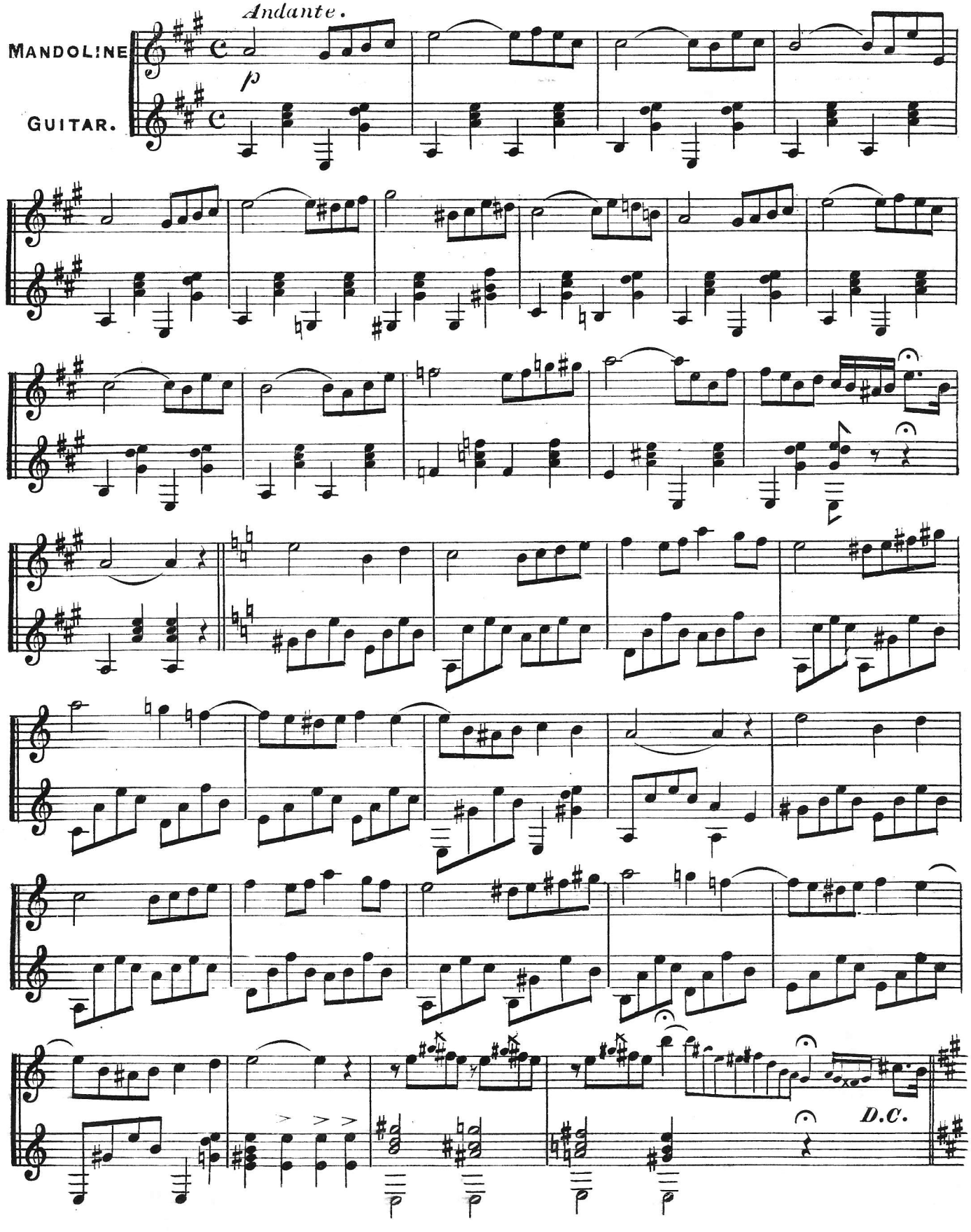
DIANE.

MELODY IN A.

HERBERT J. ELLIS.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A BANJO.

By GEORGE CECIL.

(Continued)

EVENTUALLY the unappreciative collector determined—if you please—to get rid of me, and, in due course, I was exchanged for a somewhat rare Spanish *mandora*. Before many moons had waxed and waned I became the property of a *Capitano d'Artiglieria* at Milan, an hotel *Padrone* at Venice, and a cat's meat man who catered for the grimalkins of Mantua. Taken in lieu of payment by a party of wandering minstrels, I soon found myself at Gries-Bozen, in the Austrian Tyrol, where a love-sick *Bua* bought me (as a curiosity—the impudent creature!) for his *Diandl*—a sonsie wench who wore her blond hair braided in the national Tyrolean fashion. I may add that I was not used as a musical instrument; before I had been a day in the fair shrew's possession she quarrelled with the youth of her choice and boxed his ears—with *me!* The swain (very properly) sued her for assault and battery, and was awarded damages; and I was sold, together with the rest of the lady's goods and chattels. My next owner was a jovial, tokay-drinking, hard-riding *Maygar*, who lived near Buda-Pesth. The first thing he did was to have me thoroughly overhauled and fitted with fresh strings and a brand new bridge. Next, procuring a banjo tutor, he studied its lucid pages with such intelligent application that a month after I came into his possession he had mastered several of the difficulties which assail a beginner. Unhappily, his diligence did not last long. Transferring his affection to a brown-eyed Hungarian *houri*, he absolutely neglected me. The climax, however, was reached one fine day when the before-mentioned *houri* had the colossal cheek to persuade her weak-minded admirer that I would make a suitable plaything for the head groom's unwashed brats! The creature's word being law, I was thrown to the little scrambling wretches; and a week scarcely had elapsed before they picked out my lovely mother-o'-pearl inlay. At this juncture, the stern parent interfered, and, coming to my rescue, sold me—for a fist full of small coins—to a Servian pedlar, who was on his way to Belgrade. Embarking on one of the steamers which ply between the Hungarian and the Servian capitals, I was landed at Belgrade the very week in which the ill-starred Alexander and his much-abused Queen were murdered by the leaders of the rabble. . . . Ah! *I* could tell a tale or two about certain events which lead up to that most devilish blot on the history of Servia. I heard things about the intrepid courage of Queen Draga—and about her early history—which no newspapers ever got hold of. But now that I am old, disreputable-looking and damaged beyond repair, I do not suppose anyone would attach much importance to my statements. So I will keep to myself what I heard in the Royal kitchen at the *konak* the evening the regicides butchered the Sovereign whom they had sworn to defend, and the Queen who had married the King in order to keep the poor weakling out of mischief. . . . Never was woman more misunderstood.

I remained in Servia for a whole year, during which my pedlar-owner took me all over the country. At the end of twelve month's incessant travelling, we returned to Belgrade to find that since the new King's accession, the Royal demand for plum brandy (the national tipple of the country), had almost exceeded the supply.

I again fell into the hands of a sailor—a Pole, who, in a drunken moment, mistaking me for some "Goddess of the occasion," exclaimed—"*Dame buje, moya khokanekh*" ("give me a kiss, my sweetheart"), and folded me in a fond embrace. Infuriated by the jeering laughter of his messmates, the callous brute actually pitched me overboard; and for nearly a whole day I floated on the Danube's broad surface. Rescued by the ship's black cook, I was stowed away at the bottom of his sea chest; and when, some time later I next saw daylight, I found myself in Bombay Harbour. Taking me ashore, the nigger sold me in a "bazaar" for three *rupees* eight *annas*, a bottle of gin, and an enormous bunch of bananas—or, as they call them in India, plantains. I had not been many hours in the *bunniah's* shop before I attracted the attention of a *kahki*-clad *havildar* (sergeant) of a native regiment. After an hour's haggling, the warrior finally became my possessor, and upon returning to the "lines" of his regiment, he proudly displayed me to his envious comrades. In a week, finding that the repairs of which I was sorely in need were quite beyond his scanty pay, he handed me over to a Parsee solicitor, in exchange for a plump partridge—a pet which is much in vogue with the natives of India.

(To be concluded in our next.)

THE AMERICAN GUILD OF BANJOISTS, GUITARISTS & MANDOLINISTS.

Up to the time of going to press the details of the meeting and convention, held in New York on April 14th and 15th, have not arrived, but the *New York Herald* of the 16th, reports that the concert of the previous evening was "applauded by an audience that filled the Astor Gallery in the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.

"There were solos by Mr. J. J. Derwin, Banjoist; Mr. W. E. Page, Mandolinist; and Mr. George C. Krick, Guitarist, but the chief interest was in the orchestra's performance of a "Carmen" Fantasia, and of an arrangement of Mendelssohn's "Rondo Capriccioso." Almost everything on the programme had to be repeated."

Mr. Valentine Abt had charge of the arrangements and had forty performers under his direction in the concerted items. Besides Banjos, Mandolines, and Guitars, the 'Cello was added, and we shall doubtless hear, later, more particulars of the programme in full. A special feature of this orchestra (known as the "Plectrum Society of New York"), is the accompaniment given by them to soloists. One of the most striking features of the programme appears to be the almost entire absence of *original* work—only one (unnamed) Fantasia being the exception to a long list of classical items. It is easily understood why there should be no mention of such items as "Cake Walks"—many of us are heartily tired of them ourselves—but, from America of all the whole world, we naturally look for some worthy examples of the work of those whose names are familiar here.

Especially do we await with keen interest the result of the discussion on the vexed subject (in America), of Banjo notation—whether its music shall be printed in the same key in which it is played, or whether the old (and obsolete), method of printing in one key and calling it another, shall be still adhered to. The arguments pro and con will be specially interesting.

SOME MORE NOTES ON "THE BENEFIT OF THE ACT."

By WILLET LENNOX.

THE article by Mr. Havelock Mason on "The Act," published in November, 1908 issue of "KEYNOTES," is in the main correct, and the moral to be deduced from another article entitled "Music Hall Engagements and how to procure them," by a Manager, in the October, 1907 issue of "KEYNOTES," appears to a certain extent synonymous in that both dissertations point to "novelty" as a password to success on the professional platform.

A Manager's article stated:—"It must be conceded that the Music Hall performer never had such golden opportunities for earning most substantial incomes, and always providing that he knows his public and "presents" novelty and constant change, then he should never be unemployed, for his services will be requisitioned throughout the world . . . Nothing now succeeds on the variety stage except freshness, originality, and sound talent . . . ."

In "The Benefit of the Act" we are informed:—"But what I *am* contending is, that the similarity between the various 'acts' almost amounts to a slavish imitation of one another's business, and a more frequent excursion into the realms of originality need not necessarily spell disaster, but, on the contrary, would be more likely to attract attention to themselves and their entertainment. Why is it that you cannot have your band parts arranged to suit your Banjos? The trouble is, the parts are not properly arranged . . . and the Banjo suffers."

The writer of the latter paragraph enters a mild protest against the use of the plectrum as an aid to producing sound, but—although I neither use nor advocate the co-operation of this accessory—it appears that some performers obtain excellent effects from its assistance. All these items have their day, and I can recall the introduction of the thimble, the tiny ivory plectrum for tremolo playing, and other oddments, all emanating from the ingenious brains of players who felt that "something" was necessary to influence more tone from their instruments.

Let us argue on the Drum (which term includes the Tympani and other percussion instruments) as an example. This emanated from the "Tom-tom," a prehistoric barbarous instrument used by uncivilized beings in their nondescript celebrations, war dances, &c., and all ye who have "enjoyed" (?) the privilege of being present at any of these "performances" must have been strangely im- (er, I should say) *de*-pressed by the extraordinary monotony of the functions, for let it be noted that the Tom-tom referred to is beaten with the bare hand, and the tonal results are accordingly somewhat lacking in brilliance, energy, and musical significance or colour. Anon, however, there came intellects who conceived improvements in the Tom-tom, which gradually took shape in the modern drum family, and it became expedient to invent *an accessory* in the drumstick, which stick has various forms for various music, according to the discretion and dictates of composers and arrangers. *Argumentum ad judiciam!*

This brings us straight to the point of the argument: Why the drumstick, and why the plectrum (or, hereon, other similar accessory)? Why! bless me, all music is not of the staccato kind, and sustained notes cannot be maintained with any degree of effect on either the Zither-banjo or Drum with the bare fingers.

Experientia docet! Now, a plea for the picking style of playing. Our Editor is fully aware that the present writer has seen and experienced much in the World of Entertainment, therefore the little illustration following will be appreciated for what it is worth:—"Not a great while ago I was conductor of a large pantomime, and it transpired that the 'principal boy' professed to me a practical manipulation of the 'Jo. As our pantomime was 'Robinson Crusoe'—which subject invariably includes the celebrated and homely 'Hut-scene' on the Island Robinson makes his own—an opportunity presented itself of introducing a miniature 'local convivial' in such scene, in which the Banjo could play an important part. Our 'boy' yielded to my persuasions, and the programme was selected and arranged as follows: Song with Banjo accompaniment, Banjo March, Clog Dance by 'Friday' to solo on Banjo."

Let me at once record that this "Act" was an immediate success, *and the whole of the Banjo-playing was in the picking style.* The reason why success rewarded the "act" is not far to seek, for not only did we maintain an "atmosphere" to this little "scene" on the stage, but I, personally, saw to it that the orchestra was properly equipped with correct arrangements in detail, and loyally supported the whole scheme.

Now, here is an act for two capable performers which can be almost guaranteed to please, but it is essential to do the thing properly so that the necessary "atmosphere" before alluded to, is carefully considered as an adjunct. If such a performance is hurried on with no consideration to detail, it is foredoomed to utter failure. Such "trifles" as these absolutely demand the co-operation and skill of the best possible stage-craftsmen or producers.

There are undoubtedly strong reasons for advocating the picking style of Banjo playing, as we must all agree that no implement or accessory can illustrate the staccato beauties (which are the pizzicato of the stringed instruments in the orchestra), in music specially written as can be demonstrated by skilful picking.

It might be urged, in conclusion, that should any pair of experienced performers "stage" the Act herein described, they will do much to influence an opinion in favour of the true qualities of the picking style of Banjo playing, so ably "championed" at all times by "KEYNOTES."

⁘ ⁘ ⁘

An extract from a letter reads:—

Your correspondent, E. Grimshaw, whose solos for the Banjo we are all familiar with, is right in stating that plectrum playing worthy the listening to is more difficult of acquirement than the "picking" style, but he fails to make out a clear case in its favour from a public audience point of view, as he says Banjoists are one per cent. of same, and does not show that the percentage is likely to be increased by plectrum *ad lib.* After all is said, it is only a phase of Banjo playing, though it can certainly be worked up to rank as a highly creditable performance.

⁘ ⁘ ⁘

A "summing up" of the various articles on this subject will appear in our next.

Mr. Olly Oakley has again had a busy month, his engagements including—9th Birmingham, 10th Wolverton, 11th Coventry, 12th Bidford-on-Avon, 15th Market Drayton, 19th Leeds, 28th Tunbridge Wells, 29th London (recording). During May he will be at Harrogate (Kursaal), 6th, 7th and 8th, Stourbridge 10th, Rhyl 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th.

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of "KEYNOTES."

DEAR SIR.—I have read with great interest the article on "The Benefit of the Act" in the November issue of "KEYNOTES," and, as an old-time player, thoroughly appreciate its defence of the picking style—the legitimate method of playing the Banjo. We do not often hear professional Banjoists in this remote corner of the Globe, so you may imagine that when one *is* announced to appear at our theatre the Banjo enthusiasts look forward keenly to the expected treat.

But we are almost invariably disappointed, for the long expected pleasure is turned into annoyance when we find it is only another "plectrum rasper," as Mr. Lyles so expressively puts it. During the past few years we have had perhaps half-a-dozen experiences of this kind—all being weilders of the plectrum. I have felt less impressed each time, for to me it is nothing but noise—neither Banjo music nor Banjo playing—and an entire absence of the beautiful quaint characteristic tone that is unobtainable on any other instrument. As a variety in the programme I grant the turn was appreciated by a considerable number of the audience, but to me, as a Banjoist, it soon became monotonous and unpleasant, the incessant noise and rasping being anything but musical, while I missed all the little effects so dear to Banjo players—the roll, the triplets, and others. On comparing notes afterwards with some other Banjoists who were present I asked if they felt inclined to practice with the plectrum and they all said they would not waste their time.

Certainly, if my first introduction to a Banjo had been through a plectrum player I should never have taken it up, and I am sure I am right in saying there are many more who have the same opinion. To sum the whole matter up I consider it is little better than obtaining our money under false pretences, for we pay for our seats purposely to hear a Banjo solo, not an exhibition of noise-making—which it is, neither more nor less.

Yours truly,

F. W. COLLINS.

Napier, N,Z., *Feb. 21st, 1909.*

✣ ✣ ✣

"Will you please forward to the above address one of your Bestone Bridges for a 5-stringed Banjo. Enclosed are stamps for same.

Being a teacher of the Banjo and Mandoline, I have been repeatedly asked what has become of the old nigger songs that used to be sung by the old minstrel troupes. Now, as it appears to me, it is almost impossible for a novice to get hold of any of this kind of music. I wish you could let me have a catalogue or list of anything you may have in this way.

I quite agree with Mr. Bert Bowd that this kind of thing has a tendency to chain the Banjo to the Guitar (as he remarks in the March "KEYNOTES"), but it certainly has a great fascination for the beginner, and frequently is the stepping stone leading him up to higher things."

E. B., HULL.

[*List has been despatched to you. You will find 25 different Books of Songs alone, and these contain 700 Ballads, Minstrel and Coon Songs, &c., in every possible style. Besides these there are 150 different books, giving (with other contents) about 450 Songs. Then there are many others in sheet form, so you will have a good choice from which to select.*]

To the Editor of "KEYNOTES."

DEAR SIR,—I feel I must write and congratulate you on the improvement of each issue of "KEYNOTES."

It is an admirable paper in every way, containing good music for B. M. and G., interesting notes and valuable hints, and is keenly looked forward to each month by thousands of Colonial Banjoists.

Now I am sure I shall be making a popular request, when I earnestly ask you to publish a series of articles on the life of the one man who has done more for raising the status of the Banjo, than any other, I refer to the late Herbert J. Ellis. His "Thorough School" still holds its own, and many of his compositions will never die out as long as the Banjo is played. What finer Banjo Waltz is there than the "Starlight Waltz"?

I trust some abler pen than mine will take this matter up. With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

"STAR LIGHT."

[*It so happens that a sketch of the life and work of Herbert J. Ellis has been awaiting space in "Keynotes" for some months. It's publication can be promised almost immediately, and we thank our correspondent for the suggestion to give it precedence.*—ED.]

✣ ✣ ✣

An extract from a recent letter says:—

"I am very sorry to have to return the pitch pipes again, but I am afraid after all they are no use to me. They seem to be set for tuning the Banjo up to concert pitch. I went to play at a friend's house last night and found that my Banjo was tuned about half a tone higher than his and the Piano. My friend said that probably the pipes were at concert pitch. *Could you not get me a set at the pitch of the ordinary house piano?*"

[*The italicised lines need no comment. They will be fully appreciated by players who have occasion to tune their Banjos or Mandolines to the differing pitch of almost every Piano that accompanies them.*]

✣ ✣ ✣

A. A. (LLANDUDNO) and other correspondents who have enquired with reference to the New Edition of Ellis' "Thorough School for the Five String Banjo" are informed that, notwithstanding the additional pages, the price remains as before (2/6 nett).

✣ ✣ ✣

A letter from Grahamstown, S.A., March 6th, 1909, says:—

JOHN ALVEY TURNER, Esq.,

DEAR SIR,—I received Banjo and case per return parcel post in perfect condition. Thanks very much for prompt despatch. I am very well pleased with the Banjo, being well made, beautifully finished and having superior fittings, the special feature is the good tone of remarkable sweetness; the other Banjo you sent, which arrived last week is equally satisfactory, and I think the prices very moderate for such good instruments.

✣ ✣ ✣

"Will you kindly inform me if the "Double Eagle" March, arranged for Banjo and published by you, should have the Bass string tuned to C or D."

S. W. C., CATFORD.

[*You will find it easier to play with the fourth string tuned to "D"—the note C only occurs in one movement, and can be omitted without affecting the composition materially.*

CONCERTS.

The "Silver Star" B. and M. Orchestra have had numerous engagements recently besides figuring on the list of artistes at several charity concerts. Amongst these were two on the evening of March 19th—Queen's (Small) Hall and Holborn Restaurant—and their performances have been everywhere rewarded with keen appreciation. "Return of the Regiment" (*Grimshaw*) proves a genuine success every time.

On April 22nd this orchestra gave another of their popular concerts in North London—the Myddleton Hall, Upper Street, being well filled, and with an audience which thoroughly enjoyed the lengthy programme provided. The orchestra on this occasion had to play no less than seven items, "Oakleigh" Quickstep (*Oakley*) and "Return of the Regiment" (*Grimshaw*) proving two of the best, while two arrangements by the "Silver Star" conductor (Mr. Will C. Barnes), were also encored. Messrs. Brazier and Cole gave two Banjo duets, one of which testified to their anxiety to be thoroughly up-to-date, as it was no other than Joe Morley's "Sylvanesque," which appeared in last month's "KEYNOTES." It received a well-merited encore, and a "Medley on Irish Airs" (arranged by Mr. Cole) was given. The other item was "King Cotton" March. These two gentlemen were joined by Mr. Lister in two trios for Banjos and Mandola, and the latter player also contributed two Mandola solos "Berceuse de Jocelyn" and "Preghiera," which met with a good reception. Quite a long array of vocalist and other entertainers made up a most successful evening.

✣ ✣ ✣

NOTTINGHAM.—Mr. M. Dugarde organised a concert which was an artistic and financial success, given on March 30th, at the Mechanic's Lecture Hall. The B. M. and G. Orchestra (of 30 performers) gave a very satisfactory account of themselves in several concerted items, the compositions of Grimshaw, Morley and Lansing meeting with very pronounced approval. "Dashwood" Quickstep (*Oakley*) seems to gain in popularity every day, as it figures on programmes constantly. This time it was given by Mesdames Toogood and Dugarde, and proved its value again by their careful rendering. In the second part Mr. and Mrs. Dugarde gave "En Avant," and Mr. Dugarde contributed a Guitar Solo. The latter's previous solo items were two Zither Banjo Solos, "Romanza" and "L'Hirondelle." The manner in which Mr. Dugarde's performances were received should augur well for a good increase of his teaching connection in Nottingham. Miss A. Swift was the Mandoline Soloist, and various vocal items and sketches gave further variety to the programme. We are informed that many persons were unable to gain admission owing to the hall being crowded, and a sum of £10 was handed over to the Nottingham Nursing Association.

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HULL.—Mr. M. Duffill's Kingston Banjo and Mandolin Team gave a very successful concert at the Co-operative Hall, on April 10th, almost every item was encored, special mention being made of the "Gondolier" Intermezzo, with (vocal effects). The Kingston Mandolin Quartette won great favor with "Darkey's Lament" (*Hucke*), giving as encore "Sylva" (*Ellis*). Master L. Young created a marked impression with a 'Cello Solo. The Team consists of:—Banjorines—Mr. M. Duffield and Miss M. Paxton; Banjos—Miss E. Young and Mr. S. Boxall; Mandolines—Misses F. and E. Paxton, Messrs. W. Plowman and S. Ceely; 'Cello—Mr. Young; Pianist—Mrs. Young, A.N.C.M.

SYDNEY (N.S.W.)—On February 16th, at the Unitarian Church, Hyde Park, Messrs. W. J. Stent, Saunders, and Webb gave a Mandoline and Guitar selection, "Modestie" Reverie, by Odell, and a distinctly effective arrangement of "Berceuse de Jocelyn" for Mandocello, given by Mr. W. J. Stent, with Mandola obligato by Mr. W. Saunders and organ accompaniment. It was very enthusiastically received, and had to be repeated. On March 19th, at Marrickville Church, this item was again featured with a repetition of the former success, and "Return of the Regiment" (*Grimshaw*) was given as a Banjo Quintette by Messrs. Wells, Long, Stent, Read and Wilkins. The same players also contributed "Celtic Morn," and the above-mentioned Reverie, "Modestie," was played as a Mandoline and Guitar sextette by Messrs. E., W. & O. Saunders, Steel, Rochester and Stent.

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MANCHESTER.—On Monday, March 29th, in the Co-Operative Hall, Mr. Robert Davis' B.M.G. Orchestra provided the entr'actes and musical selections at a Dramatic Performance of "The Cricket on the Hearth." "Ben Hur" overture and "Il Trovatore" selection, with some lighter numbers, made interludes of a novel character, and were much enjoyed.

✣ ✣ ✣

SHEFFIELD.—Dr. Stacey has been giving Banjo solos with the success that invariably rewards his artistic performances at Montgomery College C.C., on April 1st, and Sparrow Vale on April 13th. The finger muting of the bridge, which is now so popular with many of our solo players, is introduced by Dr. Stacey with marked effectiveness.

✣ ✣ ✣

PARIS.—France is not credited with taking kindly to the Banjo—commonly, in fact, with most other continental countries—but Paris has a staunch supporter in M. Léonardi, who has a number of pupils, and gives concerts at which the Banjo is prominently placed. On April 24th, at the Salle Berlioz "Darkies Awakening" (*Lansing*) and "Edina Schottische" (*Ellis*), were given by Mlle. Fenwick and M. Léonardi, and the "Parisian Banjo Band" gave Ellis's "Indian Patrol" and "Camp Parade" Marches. A double quintette of Mandolines, Mandola, Mandocello and Guitars rendered a number of concerted items, and provided the accompaniment to Braga's "Serenata," sung by Mlle. Girardi, and M. Léonardi gave two Guitar solos—"Spring Song" (*Mendelssohn*) and "Caprice Arabe" by *Tarrega*, and a Mandoline orchestra contributed several excerpts.

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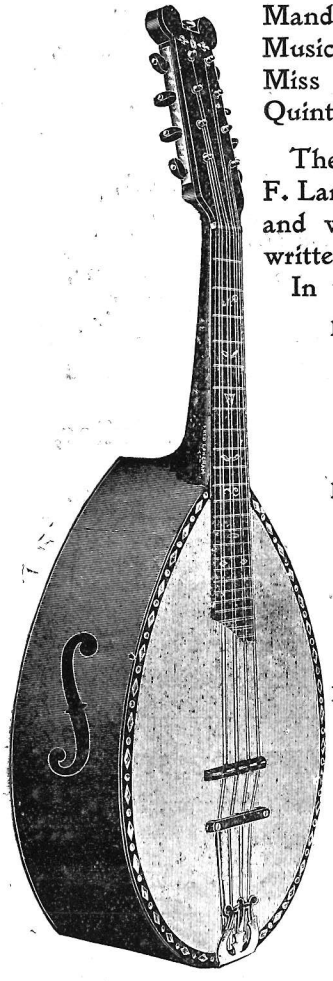

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Yours admiringly—THOS. J. ARMSTRONG.

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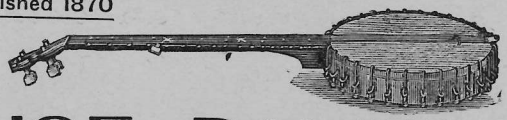

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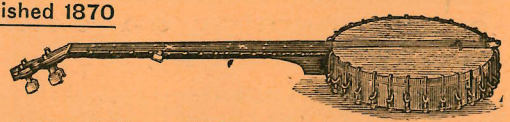

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